

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

426.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology.

426.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Official law enforcement purpose - The investigation, detection or analysis of a crime; of a violation of the Maryland vehicle laws; of a terrorist operation; or of missing or endangered person searches or alerts (Md. Code PS § 3-509).

426.2 POLICY

The policy of the Talbot County Sheriff's Office is to utilize ALPR technology to capture and store digital license plate data and images while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public.

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this office. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

426.3 RELATED PROCEDURES

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.2 Overview](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.3 Installation and Maintenance](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.4 LPR Cleaning and Maintenance](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.5 Mobile LPR Systems](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.6 Fixed LPR Systems](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.7 Hit Verification](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.8 Emergency Operations](#)

[Talbot County Sheriff's Office Procedures Manual: 401.9 Reporting](#)

426.4 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Talbot County Sheriff's Office to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access shall be managed by the Administrative Services Commander. The Administrative Services

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Commander will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

426.5 OPERATIONS

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Office members shall not use, or allow others to use, the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose.

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business (Md. Code PS § 3-509).
- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped vehicles to canvass areas around homicides, shootings and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.
- (d) No member of this office shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing office-approved training.
- (e) No ALPR operator may access confidential office, state or federal data unless authorized to do so.
- (f) If practicable, the deputy should verify an ALPR response through the appropriate official law enforcement database before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

426.6 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION

The Administrative Services Commander is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with office procedures.

All stored ALPR data should be retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances, the applicable data should be downloaded onto portable media and booked into evidence.

426.7 ACCOUNTABILITY

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Talbot County Sheriff's Office will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data (Md. Code PS § 3-509):

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- (a) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time.
- (b) Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or office-related civil or administrative action.
- (c) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.
 - 1. This shall include audits of requests made by individual law enforcement agencies and those made by individual law enforcement officers.

426.8 RELEASING ALPR DATA

Information gathered by the ALPR is not subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act (Md. Code PS § 3-509). The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law, using the following procedures:

- (a) The agency makes a written request for the ALPR data that includes:
 - 1. The name of the agency.
 - 2. The name of the person requesting.
 - 3. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.
- (b) The request is reviewed by the Administrative Services Commander or the authorized designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.
- (c) The approved request is retained on file.

Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed as provided in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.